

(Laughter)

SENATOR CHRONISTER: We have to get a chuckle out of them, Ernie. But the optometrist is trained to realize the limitations of his expertise. And when he encounters this he refers consultation or treatment, for that particular disease he encounters, to an ophthalmologist.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: I understand what he does when he or she refers. But what I'm asking is why put in the statute that anybody making a referral for treatment of an eye disorder is practicing optometry, because I may make such a referral? Why are those words necessary in the legislation?

SENATOR CHRONISTER: I think it is more or less to satisfy the medical association so that the optometrist, when he encounters this, will refer or consult with an ophthalmologist.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But it doesn't...okay, I won't belabor that point in the form of questioning. Now on page 3, at the bottom, when we get to subsection (2) it says, "No optometrist licensed in this state on or after the effective date of this act." Then on the same page, in line 11, the words "on or after the effective date of this act." What of those optometrists licensed prior to the effective date of this act? Does it mean they don't have to meet the same requirements?

SENATOR CHRONISTER: No. What this does is clear up the former act that has been in place since 1979. Topical pharmaceuticals, Senator Chambers, are ointments and eye drops.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Um huh.

SENATOR CHRONISTER: And you and I can go into a drug store and buy over-the-counter drugs that are much stronger than these ointments or eye drops that are permitted to be used by an optometrist.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But what I'm asking is why have the language "on or after the effective date"? Why not just strike those words "on or after the effective date" and make that language apply to every optometrist, even if licensed